

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 AF-10 /081 W  
-----312204Z 011180 /64

R 311605Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8075  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 7653

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT UR  
SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP NOTES

REF: (A) MOSCOW 7575, (B) MOSCOW 7463

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: BREZHNEV LOOKED IN EXCELLENT SHAPE BOTH FOR HIS TV SPEECH AND ZHIVKOV'S ARRIVAL. ZHIVKOV'S TOAST REFERRED TO BREZHNEV AS "FIRST PARTY AND STATE LEADER". A LARGE NUMBER OF "EXPLANATIONS" FOR THE PODGORNYY REMOVAL CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE. END SUMMARY.

2. BREZHNEV LOOKED IN EXCELLENT HEALTH BOTH FOR HIS  
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MAY 29 TV SPEECH (MOSCOW 7575) AND AS SEEN ON TV FOR THE MAY 30 ARRIVAL OF BULGARIAN LEADER SHIVKOV. TV SPEECH WAS PRESUMABLY SCHEDULED TO BE TAPED AT A TIME WHEN BREZHNEV WAS IN RELATIVELY GOOD FORM, BUT THE LIVE COVERAGE FOR ZHIVKOV'S ARRIVAL ALSO SHOWED AN ALERT, ACTIVE, ANIMATED BREZHNEV WHO MOVED EASILY AND STOOD WITHOUT HAT OR COAT.

3. THE FORMULATIONS OF ZHIVKOV'S TOAST AT THE STATE DINNER HOSTED BY BREZHNEV SHOW SEVERA UNUSUAL NUANCES. REFERRING TO BREZHNEV, HE SAID "TO THE FIRST PARTY AND STATE LEADER OF THE SOVIET UNION..." HE THEN WENT ON AND SAID "TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, TO CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS COMRADE KOSYGIN". WE ASSUME THAT THE MENTION OF THE TWO TOP LEADERS BY NAME UNDERLINES THE PARTY-GOVERNMENT CHARACTER OF THE VISIT AND NATURALLY AVOIDS THE PROBLEM OF PODGORNYY AS HEAD OF STATE. WE HAVE NOT NOTICED IN THE PAST THAT A VISITOR HAS REFERRED TO BREZHNEV AS "FIRST PARTY AND STATE LEADER", BUT IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE US IF THE BULGARIANS, THE MOST FAITHFUL OF ALLIES, WERE THE FIRST TO ADOPT SUCH A FORMULATION WHICH REFLECTS A STRENGTHENED POSITION FOR BREZHNEV.

4. RUMORS CONTINUE TO ABOUND ABOUT THE CAUSES FOR PODGORNYY'S REMOVAL FROM OFFICE. ANUMBER OF LOWER AND MIDDLE-LEVEL SOURCES (INCLUDING MIKOYAN'S SON AND (UNNAMED) EDITOR OF TRUD) HAVE TOLD US AND VARIOUS OTHER WESTERNERS THAT PODGORNYY'S BAD PERFORMANCE ON HIS AFRICAN TRIP WAS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF HIS OUSTER. WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE LINE THAT HAS BEEN PROMULGATED FOR OFFICIAL SOVIETS WHO HAVE CONTACT WITH WESTERNERS. THE EVIDENCE THAT WE HAVE SUGGESTS THAT PODGORNYY'S PERFORMANCE DURING HIS AFRICAN TRIP WAS ADEQUATE BY SOVIT STANDARDS, AND WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT HE EXCEEDED HIS BRIEF BY MAKING EXCESSIVE COMMITMENTS, AS SOME OF THESE SOVIET SOURCES HAVE ALLEGED.

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5. ANOTHER COMMON EXPLANATION MAKING THE ROUNDS IS DISAGREEMENT IN THE POLITBURO BETWEEN BREZHNEV AND PODGORNYY OVER THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION, PARTICULARLY OVER PROVISIONS REGARDING THE HEAD OF STATE AND THE RELATION OF THAT POSITION TO THE PARTY. WHEN PRESSED, MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE TALKED TO THIS LINE ADMIT THAT IT IS MERELY LOGICAL REASONING FROM OBSERVED FACTS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE YET TO HEAR REPORTS FROM ANY HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET SOURCE INTIMATING THAT DISAGREEMENT OVER THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION WAS AT THE HEART OF PODGORNYY'S DEPARTURE.

6. A WESTERN JOURNALIST WHO TALKED TO A "GOOD SOURCE WHO IS A SUB-DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR AT THE CPSU CC" TOLD US THAT HIS SOURCE ATTRIBUTED PODGORNYY'S OUSTER TO A DISPUTE BEGINNING AT THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, PODGORNYY'S POSITION WAS VERY MUCH WEAKER

THEN IT HAD BEEN EARLIER. SOME THOUGHT HAD BEEN  
GIVEN TO TRYING TO OUST HIM THEN, BUT IT HAD BEEN DECIDED  
NOT TO, SINCE THAT CONGRESS WAS INTENDED AS A "UNITY"  
CONGRESS. LIKE MANY OTHER SOURCES, THIS ONE ATTRIBUTED  
BREZHNEV'S DECISION TO MOVE NOW TO HIS DESIRE TO OPEN  
THE PRESIDENCY EITHER FOR HIMSELF OR, AS THIS SOURCE  
THOUGHT, FOR KOSYGIN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 7653

7. IN THIS PERIOD BEFORE THE SUPREME SOVIET (SS) SESSION,  
THE SOVIETS CONTINUE TO FINESSE THE PROBLEM OF PODGORNYY'S  
POSITION AND THE STATUS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE USSR SS.  
WHEN THE OTHER TOP LEADERS APPEAR (E.G. IN CONNECTION WITH  
THE ZHIVKOV ARRIVAL), THERE IS NO SS REPRESENTATION AT ALL.  
WHEN THE TOP LEADERSHIP IS NOT MENTIONED, THEN DEPUTY  
CHAIRMAN NIYAZBEKOV IS LISTED. THUS, HIS NAME APPEARS  
IN CONNECTION WITH REPRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONIES  
AND AWARDING OF ORDERS. THE MOST IMPORTANT OCCASION  
(FROM THE PROTOCOL POINT OF VIEW) AT WHICH NIYAZBEKOV HAS  
APPEARED WAS THE WREATH-LAYING CEREMONIES FOR ZHIVKOV AT

LENIN'S TOMB AND THAT OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER. IN THIS  
CASE, THE SENIOR PARTY OFFICIAL PRESENT WAS RUSAKOV WHOSE  
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NAME PRECEDED NIYAZBEKOV'S IN THE PRAVDA STORY. WE ASSUME  
THAT NIYAZBEKOV (WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME  
SOVIET OF THE KAZAKH SSR) WILL BE REPLACED AS THE  
OFFICIATING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE USSR SS JUNE 1. THERE  
EXISTS A SYSTEM ACCORDING TO WHICH THE REPUBLIC SS  
CHAIRMEN (WHO ARE EX OFFICIO USSR SS DEPUTY CHAIRMEN)  
ROTATE MONTHLY.  
MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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